

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #27

SEINE FISHERIES: Aerial surveys of the Eastern, Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern and Southeastern districts are scheduled for the coming week. Early season indicators of wild stock chum and pink salmon run entry and escapement in the Northern, Eastern, and Southeastern districts are behind anticipated numbers and therefore do not support a wild stock fishery at this time. VFDA completed cost recovery fishing on Wednesday, July 11. VFDA estimates approximately 20,000 pink salmon at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery, and another 300,000 to 400,000 fish at the head of the Port. VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon.

The CPF harvest estimate from the 14-hour period in the Eastern District on Sunday, July 15 is 220 sockeye, 419,000 pink and 100 chum salmon with 203 deliveries reported. ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from the Eastern District on July 15 resulted in an estimate of 53% female. Cumulative pink salmon harvest in the Eastern District through July 15 is approximately 973,800 fish for cost recovery and approximately 5 million fish for common property fisheries.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters in the Eastern District, north of a line from 61° 02.855'N., 146° 44.204'W. to 61° 02.373'N., 146° 43.407'W. to 61° 02.992'N., 146° 39.165'W., will open to commercial fishing for 14 hour periods, from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm, on Tuesday, July 17 and Wednesday, July 18. Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 23.00' W. longitude will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods. Regulatory closed waters north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point as described in 5AAC 24.350(3)(N), (O) and (P) will be in effect until further notice. Remaining regulatory closed waters (anadromous stream closures) north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point **will not be in effect** for these fishing periods. Please refer to the ADF&G 2012-2015 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound booklet for regulations regarding commercial salmon fisheries in the Prince William Sound Area. This booklet is available in the Cordova ADF&G office and at the following web address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/PWSSalmon-2012-2015.pdf>

Area at the head of Port Valdez is being restricted at VFDA's recommendation to allow for protection of broodstock that has not yet keyed in on the Solomon Gulch Hatchery. Area in Valdez Arm is being restricted to allow for wild chum salmon escapement in Galena, Sawmill and Jack bays. **Based on wild chum salmon indicators in Valdez Arm and elsewhere in Prince William Sound, it is not expected that additional area will be provided for fishing openings targeting VFDA pink salmon.**

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 18. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Wednesday, July 18. Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.